

REMARKS

These remarks are in response to the Office Action mailed December 17, 2002. Claims 5 and 27-28 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 6, 8-13, 17-23 and 26 have been amended to correct antecedent basis and claim dependency. Claims 29-31 have been added. Support for the new claims can be found in claims 18-20 prior to the amendments herein. No new matter is believed to have been introduced. Favorable consideration and allowance of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

I. REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

Claims 6 and 8-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 27 and 28 have been canceled, thus the rejection is moot with respect to these claims. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 6 and 26 have been amended as suggested by the Examiner. Thus, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the §112, second paragraph rejection of these claims.

Claims 18-20 have been amended to remove the recitation of the "specific thickness". New claims 29-31 have been added. New claims 29-31 recite the specific thickness found in claims 18-20, respectively. Thus, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the §112, second paragraph rejection of these claims.

Claim 19 has been amended to recite "thickness". Thus, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the §112, second paragraph rejection of this claim.

II. REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 5, 8-25, and 27-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly unpatentable over Hanley Jr et al. (USP 6,080,579) in view of Shah (USP 5,976,780). Claims 5, and 27-28 have been canceled, thus the rejection is moot with respect to these claims. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants respectfully submit that the references either alone or in combination fail to teach or suggest each and every element of Applicants' claimed invention. Furthermore,

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Applicants respectfully submit that there is not motivation to combine the reference of Shah with the Hanely Jr. et al. reference.

The Examiner has indicated that claim 6 and 26 are free of the prior art (see page 4 of the Office Action). Claims 8-25 and new claims 29-31 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 6. The Applicants submit that if an independent claim is nonobvious under 35 U.S.C. §103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious. *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988); MPEP §2143.03. Thus, claims 6, 8-25, 26, and 29-31 are non-obvious and patentable. Accordingly, the §103 rejection of claims 5, 8-25, 27, and 28 may be properly withdrawn.

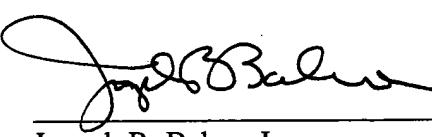
Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider the application and claims in light of the foregoing reasons and amendments and respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance.

If, in the Examiner's opinion, a telephonic interview would expedite the favorable prosecution of the present application, the undersigned attorney would welcome the opportunity to discuss any outstanding issues and to work with the Examiner toward placing the application in condition for allowance.

The response was initially due March 17, 2003. A Petition for a two-month Extension of Time, up to and including May 17, 2003, with the appropriate fee is submitted herewith. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 5/16/03



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